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Paul Offers President New Tool in the War on Terrorism

Washington, DC: Congressman Ron Paul today presented Congress with the "Marque and Reprisal Act of 2001," legislation designed to give President Bush an additional tool in the fight against terrorism. He also introduced legislation that changes the federal definition of "piracy" to include air piracy.

The Constitution gives Congress the power to issue letters of marque and reprisal when a precise declaration of war is impossible due to the vagueness of the enemy. Paul's bill would allow Congress to authorize the President to specifically target Bin Laden and his associates using non-government armed forces. Since it is nearly impossible for U.S. intelligence teams to get close to Bin Laden, the marque and reprisal approach creates an incentive for people in Afghanistan or elsewhere to turn him over to the U.S.

"The President promised the American people that the federal government would use every available resource to defeat the global terror network," Paul stated. "Congress should immediately issue letters of marque and reprisal to add another weapon to the U.S. arsenal. The war on terrorism is very different from past wars, because the enemy is a group of individuals who do not represent any nation. Western intelligence in the Middle East is exceedingly limited, so we should avail ourselves of the assistance of those with better information to track, capture, or kill Bin Laden."

The Act allows Congress to narrowly target terrorist enemies, lessening the likelihood of a full-scale war with any Middle Eastern nations. The Act also threatens terrorist cells worldwide by making it more difficult for our enemies to simply slip back into civilian populations or hide in remote locations.

"Once letters of marque and reprisal are issued, every terrorist is essentially a marked man," Paul concluded. "Congress should issue such letters and give the President another weapon to supplement our military strikes."

